PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE MSc

Flexible three-year, part-time Master’s-level programme
designed to broaden your professional expertise
while gaining a recognised qualification

Medway
INTRODUCTION

Taught by expert staff in Kent’s Centre for Professional Practice (CPP), the MSc in Professional Practice builds on your existing work experience and qualifications to further your professional development.

About the programme

Designed for participants from private, public and third sector settings, this flexible, part-time programme allows you to broaden your expertise while gaining a recognised qualification to help progress your career.

You may choose to follow one of our specific accredited pathways or select modules of personal and professional interest from across the University.

Teaching is structured around a series of taught weekends at our Medway campus, consisting of formal lectures, seminars and workshops. During the sessions, you explore your existing work practice, with modules designed to help you review and analyse current debates and challenges relevant to the professional context in which you work.

The programme gives you the opportunity to attain academic recognition for the skills, knowledge and experience you have developed in the workplace. In particular, you focus on strategic and critical analytical skills as well as knowledge relating to inter-professional working and research-based practice. By the end of the programme, you will have gained new perspectives on your professional role and developed new approaches to your day-to-day practice.

Academic excellence


CPP is a multi-professional academic department focused on flexible work-related learning within higher education and has established itself as a leading centre for education, training, and research and development.

We work with a wide range of external partners and employers to create distinct and original work-based and work-related developmental and educational programmes, which respond to the workforce challenges experienced by employees and organisations across the region and beyond.

Inspirational teaching

Kent is renowned for its teaching style; our academics have the outstanding ability to pass on their passion for study and debate. Staff are approachable and accessible; through direct contact with them, you are intellectually challenged and encouraged to broaden your horizons.

Kent was awarded gold in the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF). Based on the evidence available, the TEF Panel judged that the University of Kent delivers consistently outstanding teaching, learning and outcomes for its students. It is of the highest quality found in the UK. This gold award recognises our consistently outstanding teaching.
Professional links
Our strong links with local employers and national organisations mean we keep up-to-date with important changes and developments in the workplace and understand the needs of employers and individual staff in relation to learning and development.

Staff within CPP have a range of expertise and many have experience of working in business, industry and the health sectors, and therefore provide a valuable contribution to our programmes. In addition, CPP has a wealth of experience in delivering programmes with a work-related element, enabling us to support you to realise your potential in your working life.

Career development
A postgraduate degree in Professional Practice is a particularly valuable and flexible qualification that can open the door to exciting careers in many professions. Graduates have progressed their careers and are now working as head teachers, deputy directors in human resources and organisational development, and college and university administration managers. Our most recent students and graduates are now working for organisations in the UK such as Great Ormond Street Hospital, Health Education England, Kent Fire and Rescue Service, Kent Probation Service, Rochester Grammar School, Brompton Academy and the University of Kent.

Accreditation of Prior Experiential and/or Certificated Learning (APECL)
The Professional Practice programme may allow you to convert prior learning achievements into University of Kent academic credit via Accreditation of Prior Experiential and/or Certificated Learning. To be eligible for accreditation prior learning must be at the appropriate level and relevant to the Professional Practice programme’s learning outcomes. For details about claiming accreditation, please contact cppmedway@kent.ac.uk

Flexible study
At CPP we recognise the individual needs and working circumstances of professional people, the diverse nature of the workplace and the obstacles professionals may face in taking up learning opportunities. We specialise in flexible, part-time programmes that acknowledge the competing priorities experienced by professionals who wish to remain in employment.

We also offer a flexible approach to learning, enabling you to take single modules or work towards a postgraduate certificate, diploma or Master’s degree.

World-leading research
As a student at Kent, you are taught by leading academics, who produce research of international standing. Based on our excellent results in the most recent Research Excellence Framework (REF), Kent was ranked in the top 20* for research intensity by the Times Higher Education, confirming our position as one of the UK's leading research-intensive universities.

A global outlook
Kent has a great international reputation, attracting academic staff and students from around the world.

Our students benefit greatly from the diversity of the University community. Around 42% of our academic staff are from overseas and there are 158 nationalities represented at Kent, reinforcing our international reputation and creating a student body of which 27% are international students.

* of 122 universities, not including specialist institutions
What do you think your studies have developed you in your working practice?
I believe the biggest change is my ability to think critically. I am confident to challenge evidence as appropriate, drill down into what is important for a project and ensure that I have relevant data to support suggestions I put forward.

What did you research for your dissertation?
I used my dissertation to research influencing factors on sickness absence within a particular employee band in the department. Research indicated that organisational factors (policies, procedures, support networks and working relationships) and personal factors (identity, personal resources and the ability to cope with job demands) influenced sickness absence. To address these findings I have designed and facilitated workshops aimed at fostering identity and strengthening relationships.

What are you planning to do next?
I enjoy learning, so my answer would be to continue my professional development within the University. For now, I am focusing on delivering my role and supporting projects within the department but every so often I consider undertaking a PhD...
Professional Practice

This degree allows for greater insight, personal reflection and the time to really challenge yourself to complete a unique degree program. It lends itself to each student focusing on their own practice, and actually improving it, by taking the time to reflect on existing practice based on reality, as well as theory and literature.

What are you planning to do next?
I would like to consider further academic study as I really enjoyed this program — and it would almost certainly be at Kent.

Can you offer any advice for those thinking about taking this course?
Just do it! Take time to speak with the tutors as they are clear and honest about the programme and your commitment to it — but if you are looking for an enjoyable degree programme, then you have found it.

James Devine graduated from the university with an MSc in Professional Practice. He is Chief Executive of the Medway NHS Foundation Trust.

What attracted you to studying Professional Practice at Kent?
This type of Master’s qualification is unique in that it allows you to focus your studies on wider aspects of human resource management rather than the traditional, expected elements. I had worked with some of the tutors before, so I was aware of their calibre. The programme was structured around work, being on a Friday, Saturday and Sunday every six to eight weeks, meaning that my time away from work was kept to a minimum. This was a great selling point.

What did you particularly enjoy?
The tutors and my colleagues on the programme made it enjoyable, yet challenging enough that you knew you were benefiting from your studies.

What about the teaching?
Without exception, it was excellent! All the tutors were very different, yet they offered something to every student. Nothing was ever too much trouble, and they often shared their own time to ensure that you didn’t leave until you were clear about what was expected of you with regard to the assignments.

How would you describe your fellow students?
We all came from such varying backgrounds that when we saw each other, we were able to share new strategies and get advice on how to deal with situations. We always talked about the assignments and how we could share resources. It was never competitive, it was about supporting each other so that we all reached the finish line together.

Did you feel well supported in your studies?
Yes, the support was very good, particularly from the tutors. I think any other place of study would be hard pushed to compete with the tutors within the Professional Practice programme at Kent.

What about the facilities?
The facilities on campus were great for part-time students, with the library being open until 11pm during term time.

How do you think your studies at Kent have affected your employment prospects?
I think they have improved vastly. Not just having a degree on my record, but the new skill sets, confidence and improved competence are all benefits to studying this programme.

Learning from colleagues and listening to their stories and professional challenges have also helped.

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PROGRAMME STRUCTURE

The Professional Practice programme is designed to be completed over three years of part-time study, consisting of compulsory modules, plus a choice of optional modules offered by the Centre and/or from the wider University module catalogue. A final dissertation allows you to carry out an independent research project to explore a particular area of interest.

You can choose one of the following pathways:

• Professional Practice PCert, PDis, MA/MSc
• Professional Practice (Teaching and Learning) PDis, MSc.

Students following the PCert or PDis routes are only required to attend the study modules; they do not need to complete a dissertation. PCert students must successfully complete 60 credits worth of taught modules while PDis students must successfully complete 120 credits worth of taught modules.

Teaching methods

Teaching sessions are structured around the programme's taught weekend sessions, which typically run from Friday to Sunday. These sessions include lectures, seminars, workshops and one-to-one supervisions.

Professional Practice PCert, PDis, MA/MSc

This flexible programme has been designed to encourage you to think more deeply about the challenges associated with your professional practice while enabling you to tailor your degree to your particular interests and career aspirations.

Course content

Stage 1

• Learning and Development in Organisations (30 credits)
• Evidence-Based Practice (15 credits)
• Inter-professional Working (15 credits)

Optional modules

You select from the following optional modules from within CPP (up to 45 credits), subject to availability; or a choice of modules from across the University (up to 45 credits); or a combination of both (subject to availability) up to 45 credits:

• Academic Threshold Concepts (15 credits)
• Power Dynamics in the Workplace (30 credits)
• Qualitative Research Methods Applied to Professional Practice (15 credits)
• Special Area of Study (30 credits).

Stage 3

• Dissertation (60 credits)

Professional Practice (Teaching and Learning) PDis, MSc

This is a specialist work-related pathway designed for qualified teachers.

Course content

Stage 1

• Learning and Development in Organisations (30 credits)
• Evidence-Based Practice (15 credits)
• Inter-professional Working (15 credits)

Stage 2

• The Role of Schooling: A Thinking Approach (15 credits)
• Addressing Barriers to Learning (30 credits)

Stage 3

• Dissertation (60 credits)

Assessment

Assessment includes written assignments, work-based projects, oral presentations, portfolio assessment, seminar contributions and reflective learning submissions. In the final stage of the programme, you complete a dissertation of 10-12,000 words.
As an evidence-based approach to professional working increases throughout organisations, there is a need for professionals to analyse critically within their own practice. This module prepares you to take part in research related to your own workplace and supports you to develop the skills to enable this process. You critically analyse research methodology and appraise the ever-increasing body of literature to enable an evidence-based approach to enhance professional effectiveness. There is the opportunity to develop a research proposal relevant to the workplace and use this project to develop skills in accessing literature databases and the internet, as well as critically assessing the limitations and appropriateness of research findings and methodologies.

**Inter-professional Working**
This module raises awareness about collaborative working as an increasingly important part of workplace culture. You focus on collaborative working through a journey of examination, discussion and reflection on emerging collaborative practices. The role of research in, and its impact on, interdisciplinary and collaborative working is also explored. The overall theme of the module stresses the importance of building on experiential learning when working together with others, while developing critical perspectives on project management and leadership in an inter-professional context.

**Research Skills**
As an evidence-based approach to professional working increases throughout organisations, there is a need for professionals to analyse critically within their own practice. This module prepares you to take part in research related to your own workplace and supports you to develop the skills to enable this process. You critically analyse research methodology and appraise the ever-increasing body of literature to enable an evidence-based approach to enhance professional effectiveness. There is the opportunity to develop a research proposal relevant to the workplace and use this project to develop skills in accessing literature databases and the internet, as well as critically assessing the limitations and appropriateness of research findings and methodologies.
Dissertation
The dissertation provides you with the opportunity to undertake a research project carried out in the workplace, which is relevant to your professional practice. You critically examine, in depth, a research question relevant to your practice. This should be supported by a critical review of the literature, a statement of the methods, an analysis of the data and an extended discussion of the findings.

Optional modules
Below is a list of the optional modules offered by CPP, subject to availability, and open to those students who are able to choose optional modules in Stage 2 of their programme. You can select modules of personal or professional interest from those offered by CPP, the wider University or a combination of both.

Academic Threshold Concepts
Threshold concepts are ideas and principles which are considered conceptual gateways that must be embraced before further new understanding can begin. This module is for those who are working at Master’s level in terms of their professional practice and who wish to translate that level of professional practice into an academic award, transforming practitioner identity into one that has an academic dimension.

Power Dynamics in the Workplace
You gain theoretical and applied knowledge and the opportunity to reflect critically and evaluate the theory and practice of power in the context of your own practice. This enables you to develop and apply strategies and techniques which are contextually relevant to your own workplace. Key topics include: ideological power and the language of power; power – a multifactorial concept; principles of power in relation to interpersonal relationships; critique power theory; dimensions and impact of power; application of concepts of power to your working practice.

Qualitative Research Methods Applied to Professional Practice
Here, you examine the theory and practice of qualitative research. You explore the various aspects of qualitative data collection techniques and methods of analysis as appropriate to an area of work-based enquiry related to your own professional practice. Topics covered include: the interview and interviewing techniques; focus groups; phenomenological methods of enquiry; ethnographic theory and method; case study methods; action research; documentary research; discourse analysis; content analysis; and narrative analysis.

Special Area of Study
You create, design and implement a specialist project. By exploring a number of themes and concepts, for example, reflection on past or current practice or a piece of action research for the development of future practice, you are given the flexibility to design your own special area of study that can be related to innovation on a policy or practice matter. Through this module, you enhance the development of your...
everything that takes place’, the concept is now embraced within the UK educational sector as a model for evolving the educational structure within primary and secondary education. Here, you critically consider the concepts and principles of a thinking school in order to develop education professional practice. In particular, you gain a critical understanding of theoretical meta-cognitive processes and tools that underpin the language of a thinking school; analyse leadership approaches required to develop a thinking school which can be applied within the workplace; critically appraise vision statements to gain clarity on vision creation within current work-based practice; and create a strategic plan to model within current work-based practice.

Addressing Barriers to Learning
Overcoming the barriers to learning is the perpetual challenge within all teaching environments, one which has a significant impact on both learners and teachers alike. This module develops your understanding of the theoretical issues and practical challenges surrounding identified barriers to learning. Through an examination of current educational debates and reflection on experiential practice, you develop an awareness of potential strategies to address the barriers.

“As I joined this programme to consolidate my experience, take a view of my own practice and employment sector through a theoretical/academic lens and also to obtain a higher degree; something I had wanted to do for many years. The Professional Practice MSc is an excellent opportunity to meet all of these requirements.”

Jane Howard
MSc Professional Practice
HOW TO APPLY

Who should apply
This programme is suitable for professionals in a variety of settings including the private, public and third sectors, for example, health and social care, education, local government and public services. However, we welcome applications from all sectors.

Entry requirements
Applicants should hold a professional qualification or appropriate degree-level qualification and/or equivalent work experience at the appropriate level. Students entering the programme will be expected to demonstrate professional experience in a role that involves responsibility, which they have held for at least two years.

Applicants without traditional qualifications will be considered on an individual basis and will be required to demonstrate potential to study at postgraduate level.

English language
The University requires all non-native speakers of English to reach a minimum standard of proficiency in written and spoken English before beginning a postgraduate degree.

Minimum standard: IELTS – 6.5, incl 6.0 in reading and writing, and 6.5 in listening and speaking; Pearson Test of English Academic (PTE Academic) – 62, incl 60 in each subtest; Cambridge English: Advanced and Proficiency 176, incl minimum of 169 in reading and writing and 162 in speaking and listening; Internet-based TOEFL – 90 incl minimum of 22 in reading, 21 in writing, 17 in listening, 20 in speaking.

If you do not reach the required standard, you can apply for one of our pre-sessional courses. For further information, please see www.kent.ac.uk/ip.

Only English language tests taken up to a maximum of two years prior to the date of registration will be accepted for admission to the University.

Making an application
You can apply online at www.kent.ac.uk/courses/postgrad/apply

Application deadline
We strongly recommend that you apply as soon as possible. For further information, please contact CPP (see right).

Tuition fees
For the most up-to-date information on tuition fees, visit www.kent.ac.uk/finance-student/fees

Centre enquiries
If you would like an informal discussion about joining the Professional Practice programme, you may contact the Programme Director via CPP (see right).

Admissions enquiries
T: +44 (0)1227 768896

This brochure was updated in June 2019. The University of Kent makes every effort to ensure that the information contained in its publicity materials is fair and accurate and to provide educational services as described. However, the courses, services and other matters may be subject to change. For the most up-to-date information, see www.kent.ac.uk/pg and for full details of our terms and conditions, see www.kent.ac.uk/termsandconditions

For the University to operate efficiently, it needs to process information about you for administrative, academic and health and safety reasons. Any offer we make to you is subject to your consent to process such information and is a requirement in order for you to be registered as a student. All students must agree to abide by the University rules and regulations at: www.kent.ac.uk/regulations

Location
Medway

Faculty
Faculty of Social Sciences

Centre
Centre for Professional Practice

Contact
Centre for Professional Practice
T: +44 (0)1634 888929
E: cppmedway@kent.ac.uk
www.kent.ac.uk/cpp

Applications
Online at www.kent.ac.uk/courses/postgrad/apply

Come and visit us
We hold postgraduate events throughout the year. For details, see www.kent.ac.uk/opendays
COME AND VISIT US

To find out more about visiting the University, see our website:
www.kent.ac.uk/visit